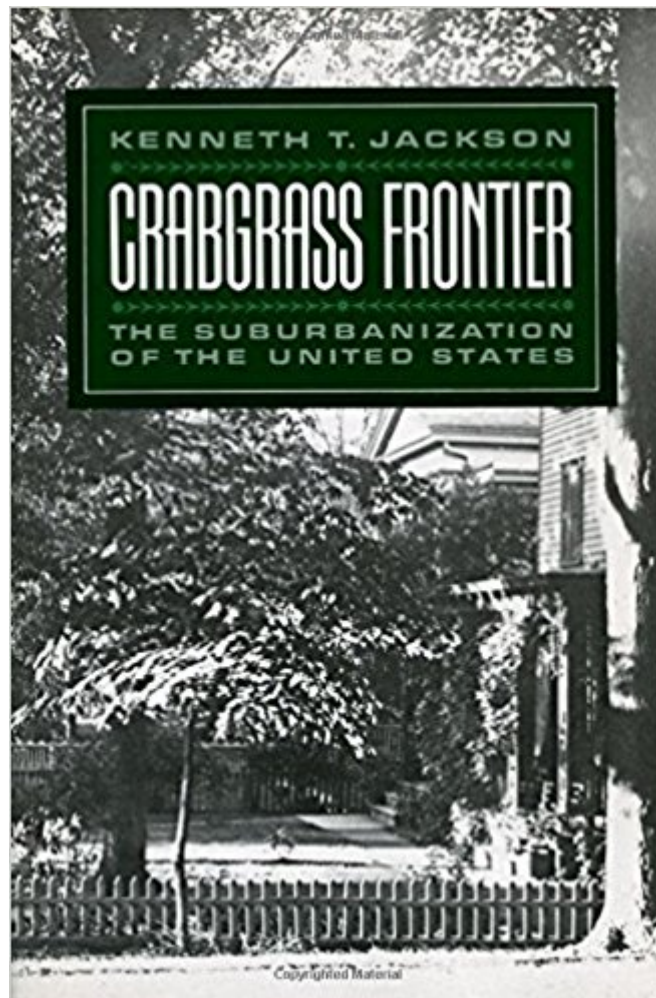




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# Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization Of The United States



## Synopsis

This first full-scale history of the development of the American suburb examines how "the good life" in America came to be equated with the a home of one's own surrounded by a grassy yard and located far from the urban workplace. Integrating social history with economic and architectural analysis, and taking into account such factors as the availability of cheap land, inexpensive building methods, and rapid transportation, Kenneth Jackson chronicles the phenomenal growth of the American suburb from the middle of the 19th century to the present day. He treats communities in every section of the U.S. and compares American residential patterns with those of Japan and Europe. In conclusion, Jackson offers a controversial prediction: that the future of residential deconcentration will be very different from its past in both the U.S. and Europe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A compelling narrative.... Jackson traces the consequences of the predominantly North American process [of suburbanization] through three centuries of technological, economic and social innovation."--Philadelphia Inquirer

Kenneth T. Jackson, Professor of History at Columbia University, is the author of *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*; *Cities in American History*; and a number of other books.

This book was suggested by my professor for additional readings for my research. I dreaded additional work but sucked it up and actually enjoy the book. It is very well written and extremely

detailed about this history and extremely fast expansion of urban sprawl in the United States. There is good comic relief ever now and then but focused on the subject. I splurged and got the audio for the kindle which I had never done before and it highlights the line that the narrator. The narrator have good change in tone and reads at a normal rate.

This is probably the first comprehensive study of suburbanization. Jackson traces the history of urban development and provides a persuasive chronology of events that led to the present American society. His analysis of the social, political and intellectual context leading the formation of Levittowns in the 1950s is sound and useful to understand the more distant causes of "white flight" in the 1960s and 70s. Both in depth and breadth, this is certainly the book for the general audience on the topic.

This book is THE basic reference on American suburbs, their cause and, sometimes, their cure. Jackson's chapters on how government-subsidized financing practically guaranteed "white only" suburbs post-WW II is fascinating as is his account of the politics of private development based on infusions of public money, e.g. the FHA and the VA loan programs. He also includes a lot of landscape architectural history in his discussions of pre-WW II 'burbs. Fascinating material.

Essential reading if you want to understand what's going on in American cities today. Wake up kids!

Very thorough historical perspective of suburban sprawl in the US; informative and an enjoyable read.

An extremely interesting read. Provides a narrative that can be found interesting by many fields: students of history, urban studies, economics and geography could definitely benefit from familiarizing themselves with the book. Moreover, it is well-written with a structure that is clear and easy to follow.

It's an acknowledged classic in the field of Urban History, but it's twenty years old and the last quarter of Crabgrass reads like it. Delores Hayden has covered the same ground in her more recent "Building Suburbia". The approach is historical, Jackson takes each period of suburbanization in chronological order. In terms of explanation for why America is so suburban, he focuses on government policy and the unique characteristics of the American middle class mind. Also, the fact

that land is cheap is important. Readers may want to check out Building Suburbia for a more recent treatment of the same subject.

I love this book. It takes you back and allows you to contextualize the American home and way of life. His comparison with Europe are helpful but I wish he made more as well as more to Asian cities (he only mentions Japan a few times). It really gives some great insight into how the American lifestyle got where it is. I am not waiting for a more recent book with similar scholarship. His review of how people viewed the home and (public/private) space in general since the nineteenth century was the most interesting aspect of the book for me.

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